

Bassetlaw Training Agency Ltd

Inspection date

29 November 2007

Inspection number

316735

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	4
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	8
What learners like	11
What learners think could improve.....	11
Sector subject areas.....	12
Health, public services and care	12
Preparation for life and work.....	15
Learners' achievements	17

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Health, public services and care
- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. Bassetlaw Training Agency Ltd (BTA) was established in 1978, sponsored by the voluntary sector and became a company limited by guarantee in April 1988. It is based in Worksop and specialises in providing training and support to meet the needs of learners and the local community in an area of considerable social disadvantage.
2. BTA receives government funding from Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeship programmes in health, public services and care, retail and commercial enterprises and business administration and law and to provide an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in preparation for life and work. A small number of learners are on Train to Gain programmes in early years and business administration. BTA also receives European Social Funding to provide vocational training for 14 to 16 year olds from the local secondary school and are also subcontractors from North Nottinghamshire College to provide vocational programmes for school pupils aged 14 to 16 years. At the time of the inspection, a total of 78 learners were on training programmes.
3. The inspection included health, public services and care early years provision with 17 learners, and preparation for life and work Entry to Employment (E2E) provision with 15 learners. Government-funded training forms most of the funding for the organisation.
4. BTA is located in Bassetlaw local authority, where in 2006 only 41.8% of 15 year olds achieved A* - C at GCSE, compared with a national average of 58.5%, and where 16.9% of adults of working age have no qualifications, compared with a national average of 13.8%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2

Achievement and standards**Satisfactory: Grade 3****Quality of provision****Satisfactory: Grade 3****Leadership and management****Satisfactory: Grade 3****Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2**

Sector subject area

Health, public services and care**Satisfactory: Grade 3****Preparation for life and work****Satisfactory: Grade 3**

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. The quality of the health and social care early years provision and the preparation for work and life E2E provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in early years are satisfactory, as are progression rates in E2E. The achievement of additional work-related qualifications is good and literacy qualifications in E2E is satisfactory.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Training is satisfactory, with some good recent improvements in early years. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is satisfactory. The use of work placements to develop learners' vocational skills on E2E is good.
7. Guidance and support are very good. Staff are skilled at providing very good personal and academic support for learners who have considerable barriers to learning. Links with other agencies that provide more specialist support are good.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Progress in improving success and progression rates was slow until 2005/06, when these rates reached national averages. The management of numeracy support in E2E is inadequate. The emphasis on equality and diversity is strong throughout the organisation. Quality improvement arrangements are good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

9. BTA has demonstrated good capacity to improve. Three of the four weaknesses in leadership and management identified at the previous inspection in 2003 are now satisfactory and the fourth, relating to quality assurance, is now a strength. Measures to support disadvantaged learners, staff development and the strong emphasis on equality of opportunity remain strengths. In 2005/06, success and progression rates in early years and E2E improved to around the national averages. Following a period of high staff turnover and sickness during 2005/06, new staff came in place in 2007, bringing significant benefits for learners and positive improvements in the pace of learners' achievements.
10. The self-assessment process is thorough and takes account of the views of learners, staff and employers. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and accurate. Inspectors agreed with many of the identified strengths and areas for improvement and also with the grades awarded. Self-assessment action plans are regularly monitored and completed actions updated at management and team meetings.

Key strengths

- Good quality improvement
- Good staff development

- Good use of a wide range of supportive work placements
- Very good support for learners
- Strong emphasis on equality and diversity throughout the organisation

Key areas for improvement

- Continuity of staffing
- Success rates in early years and progression rates in E2E
- Focus on key skills in early years
- Personal and social development of learners on E2E
- Management of numeracy support

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates in early years have improved and are now satisfactory, with good improvements in the pace of learner progress in 2007.

Progression rates in E2E are satisfactory, with good recent improvements from August 2007. The achievement of additional work-related qualifications is good and is satisfactory for literacy qualifications in E2E. Standards of learners' written work are good in early years. The development of learners' vocational skills and confidence in the work-place is good in E2E. Inspector's judgements matched most of the strengths and areas for improvement in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Training is satisfactory, with some good recent improvements in early years and examples of highly motivating and engaging learning opportunities. Assessment practice in early years has greatly improved over the past six months, although the focus on the development of key skills is insufficient. Within E2E, training in the workplace is good. Training to develop learners' personal and social skills outside of the work-place is insufficient. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Literacy support is satisfactory, but numeracy support is inadequate in E2E. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory.
13. BTA offers a satisfactory range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests. Learners on E2E benefit from the good use of a wide range of supportive work placements on E2E.
14. Guidance and support are very good. Staff are skilled at providing very good personal and academic support for learners who have considerable barriers to learning. Links with other agencies that provide more specialist support are good. The self-assessment report identified the very good support for all learners.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic planning is clear, with a detailed three year business plan, which reflects local needs and regional and national priorities. BTA has developed good quality improvement arrangements. This was found as a weakness at the previous inspection, however it is now a strength. Clear written procedures are in place, with good planning for quality audits and the auditing process successfully identifying areas for improvement. Tutors are observed, feedback provided and clear action points identified and followed up until completed. Lesson observations were graded higher than the grades given by inspectors. Learners and employers complete questionnaires each year. Managers analyse and include these in a comprehensive annual report on quality issues, with recommendations for improvements. Staff regularly use management information data, particularly to monitor learner progress and achievement and take prompt action if data indicates that learners are falling behind. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

16. The self-assessment process is thorough and takes account of the views of learners, staff and employers. The self-assessment report draws upon data analysis of learners' achievements and trends over time, and is comprehensive and accurate. Inspectors agreed with many of the identified strengths and areas for improvement and also with the grades awarded. Self-assessment action plans are regularly monitored and completed actions updated at management and team meetings.
17. Staff development is good, a strength which was identified in the self-assessment report. Following a period of high staff turnover and sickness during 2005/06, new staff came in place in 2007, with significant improvements for learners across the provision. Staff have a thorough annual appraisal, with training needs clearly identified and targets agreed and set for individuals in line with business plan objectives. Staff attend a good range of courses to improve and to update their skills and understanding. Courses on equality and diversity help raise staff awareness and support them well in promoting equality and diversity issues with learners. Links with employers are well established and support learners well. The quality of information, advice and guidance and response to learners' diverse needs is good.
18. BTA has a strong emphasis on equality and diversity. BTA recruits learners from some very deprived areas of North Nottinghamshire and learners often face a wide range of educational, social and personal problems. The organisation provides very good individual support to learners to help them overcome any barriers to learning. All learners are treated with a great deal of care and respect. They receive detailed information and training about equality and diversity, and have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Learners greatly appreciate that bullying and other forms of harassment are not tolerated. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups. Staff have regular training on equality and diversity. Policies and procedures for equality and diversity are regularly updated and these mainly relate to staff rather than also specifying how the policies also apply to learners. Although, additional statements on equality and diversity are available for learners in a language they can more easily understand. A child protection policy is in place, specifically targeted at 14 to 19 year olds, but it currently fails to cover the needs of vulnerable adults. This was recognised by the organisation and managers have been trained to further their understanding of the safeguarding requirements.
19. Accommodation is generally satisfactory. The management of literacy support is satisfactory. Specialist dyslexia assessment and support is available. The management of numeracy support is inadequate in E2E, with staff insufficiently qualified and insufficient opportunities for learners to access numeracy support.
20. Staffing problems at BTA greatly impacted on the progress of many learners during 2005/06. Several key staff were away for long periods due to long-term illnesses. Other key members of staff left the company. This led to delays in carrying out training and assessments and significantly affected learners' motivation and achievement. New staff are in place in 2007, with some highly motivated tutors in early years and E2E, and with significant improvements in success and progression rates.

What learners like:

- Very helpful and knowledgeable staff
- How strict they are about bullying
- Practical nature of the course
- Working with other learners in the group
- 'I really like it here. I didn't get on well at school'
- 'I'd recommend coming here to my friends'
- 'I enjoy my work placement. I get here early and haven't missed a day'

What learners think could improve:

- Canteen and vending facilities
- 'The allowance we get. I have to work as well.'
- 'The holidays, so they are more like college holidays'

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

21. At the time of the inspection, 17 learners were on early years training in children's care, learning and development programmes, of whom 13 learners were on apprenticeship programmes and four were on advanced apprenticeship programmes. Of the 17 learners, three are male. There are two learners on Train to Gain programmes, who were not in the scope of this inspection. Most learners on early years programmes are not employed when they start training and are placed in work placements with employers. They attend off-the-job training one day a fortnight at BTA's training centre in Worksop. Learners take a range of additional qualifications to support their main vocational area. Assessment is carried out by BTA's staff.

Strengths

- Highly motivating and engaging learning
- Very good academic and personal support
- Good recent initiatives to improve success rates

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress in achievement of apprenticeship frameworks
- Insufficient focus on key skills development

Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for apprenticeships improved significantly from 0% in 2004/05 to 53% in 2005/06, compared with a national framework completion rate of 50%. Some learners made slow progress in achieving their apprenticeship framework or NVQ within the scheduled time limits. In 2007, with the advent of new staff, learners' timely progress and achievement are now much improved. Learners achieve a broad range of relevant additional qualifications including; manual handling, food hygiene, health and safety and paediatric first aid.

23. The standard of learners' written work is good. Portfolios are well organised. Particularly good use is made of reflective accounts to develop and improve learners' practice. Attendance and punctuality are good. Progression is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

24. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Training is satisfactory overall, improving significantly in 2007, following the appointment of new staff. Highly motivating and engaging learning, in lessons, placement, and through the processes of assessment and reviews, is now building learners' confidence and self-belief and encouraging them to succeed. The relationship between staff and learners is now good. In lessons, enthusiastic learners work purposefully, share ideas, ask questions, and demonstrate a good level of

knowledge and understanding. Employers are very supportive of learners and encourage them to attend training.

25. Assessment practice has improved in 2007. Improved planning and holistic assessment are beginning to have an impact on the timely completion of NVQs. Assessors provide clear and detailed feedback to learners on how to improve. Internal verification is good and these visits ensure that each learner's file is reviewed at least every 12 weeks and that assessment standards are maintained. Regular progress reports keep learners and employers fully informed of individual learner progress and remedial action is taken if learners are falling behind schedule.
26. Resources are generally satisfactory. A small computer room with internet access is available on an open access basis for independent study. Key texts are provided for use in class and for loan. A limited range of art materials is available for the development of practical craft skills. The identification and provision of support for literacy is satisfactory but is less well developed for numeracy.
27. The focus on the development of key skills is insufficient. Key skills start late in the programmes and are not sufficiently integrated within technical certificate or NVQs. Key skills assessments are insufficiently contextualised and opportunities for key skill development in lessons are missed.
28. The range of programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Employers are kept fully informed of learner progress and contribute effectively to target-setting and review. Staff work well with employers to reinforce the importance of training.
29. Academic and personal support for learners is very good and tailored to the needs, skills and abilities of individual learners. Placement visits are planned at intervals of four to eight weeks and additional visits and tutorials are arranged on an individual basis if learners are falling behind with their course work or NVQ assessment. A strong staff commitment to equality and diversity ensures that the needs of both able and less able learners are met. Advice and guidance are good, with good learner access to specialist support.

Leadership and management

30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staffing difficulties had a negative impact on learners and learner success rates up to 2007. However, in June 2007, new staff were appointed and they have introduced good recent initiatives to improve success rates, including an improved review process and a more systematic approach to the monitoring and monitoring of learner progress. Changes to quality systems and processes are beginning to impact positively on achievement. Staff undertake a good range of continuing professional development, relevant to their job role and current levels of experience. The lesson observation process is insufficiently developmental, particularly for new and relatively inexperienced staff.
31. Equality and diversity is effectively promoted. Values and principles are integrated and reinforced within teaching, learning and assessment and learner understanding of equality

and diversity is good. The sector subject area has been successful in recruiting males into childcare.

32. The self-assessment report broadly identified the key strengths and areas for improvement and inspectors agreed with the grade awarded.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

33. At the time of the inspection, 15 learners were enrolled on the E2E programme. Learners join E2E throughout the year and they are referred from the Connexions service, from learners themselves and from other local agencies. The programme includes attendance on work placements to gain vocational knowledge and skills, literacy and numeracy support and support for personal and social development. Learners have opportunities to gain additional qualifications in health and safety, manual handling, literacy and numeracy.

Strengths

- Good development of skills and confidence in the workplace
- Good achievement of additional qualifications
- Good use of a range of supportive work experience placements
- Very good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Not enough training to develop learners' personal and social skills
- Inadequate numeracy support
- Unclear induction process for learners

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Progression rates are satisfactory overall, at 45% in 2006/07 and with an 80% progression rate in the first three months of the contract year for August to October 2007. The achieved objectives rate is low. BTA places a strong emphasis on learning in the work-place and learners develop good skills and confidence while on work placements. Learners significantly increase in self-confidence and improve timekeeping and attendance. They also develop a good range of vocational skills, for example creative skills in working with children, caring skills with the elderly, customer-service skills and pricing skills in retail. The achievement of additional work-related qualifications in health and safety and manual handling is good. The achievement of literacy qualifications is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

35. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Training is satisfactory overall. Training in the workplace is good. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory. Initial assessment and the assessment of learner progress are satisfactory. There is not enough training to develop learners' personal and social skills outside of the workplace. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Some learners have poor personal and social skills when they start the E2E programme and require additional training to help them develop and improve these skills. The organisation is aware of this and has plans in place to develop this training.

36. Literacy support is satisfactory, but numeracy support is inadequate. Learners do not have enough opportunities to develop their numeracy skills and staff are insufficiently qualified. Paper-based resources and photo-copied worksheets on abstract concepts are over-used and numeracy support is not sufficiently related to learners' personal, social and work-placement contexts.
37. The induction process for learners is unclear of which is identified in the self-assessment report. Feedback from learner questionnaires identified that the generic induction into BTA, does not sufficiently meet the needs of E2E learners, with too much detailed written material and language that is too complex for many E2E learners. E2E staff are currently revising the induction process and supportive materials for new learners.
38. The range of provision is satisfactory. Learners make good use of a wide range of supportive work placements. All learners quickly move into a work experience placement and many make good progress in developing vocational skills. Learners have good opportunities to sample different vocational areas, particularly in childcare, retail, business administration and hair and beauty. Communication between BTA staff and employers is effective and any problems are quickly resolved.
39. Support for learners is very good. All learners have their needs met on an individual basis, from dyslexia assessment and support sessions, good referral to a wide range of specialist external agencies, well established and wide-ranging local contacts, help towards the cost of buying appropriate clothes for work and individual support to help progression. Advice and guidance is good, with good learner access to specialist support.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management action to improve learner progression rates was slow until the beginning of 2007. From this time, with the appointment of new staff, actions to improve the provision are leading to improvements in the organisation and management of E2E. Quality improvement arrangements are now good. E2E progression rates increased considerably from August to October 2007. Staff development opportunities are good.
41. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is good. Many learners were previously bullied or harassed and they greatly appreciate the fact that these are not tolerated within the organisation. Staff receive regular training on equality and diversity and meet learners' needs on an individual basis. The self-assessment report is detailed and accurate and identified the key strengths and areas for improvement in E2E. Inspectors agreed with the grade awarded.

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by Bassetlaw Training Agency Ltd 2004 to 2007.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	12	58%	47%	42%	21%
		timely	10	10%	28%	0%	12%
		overall	7	14%	46%	0%	29%

	2005/06	timely	15	7%	21%	0%	13%
		overall	19	63%	58%	53%	50%
		timely	15	0%	31%	0%	25%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E)** programmes managed by Bassetlaw Training Agency 2005 to 2008.

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005/06	37	11%	14%
2006/07	31	19%	45%
2007/08 (3 months)	10	10%	80%

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms of learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

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